

other (explain):

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools of Virginia Multiple Property Document

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**5. Classification**

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National  
Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Rosenwald Schools in Virginia**

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **Education** Sub: **School**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **Vacant / Not in use** Sub

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

**Other**

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: **Stone (Piers only)**

Roof: **Metal (Tin)**

Walls: **Wood (Weatherboard)**

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools of Virginia Multiple Property Document

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

**Education; Ethnic Heritage (African American); Architecture**

**Period of Significance: Ca. 1917-1941**

**Significant Dates: Ca. 1917, 1941**

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above): **NA**

**Cultural Affiliation: NA**

**Architect/Builder: Unknown**

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University: **Rosenwald Archives, Fisk University**
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools of Virginia Multiple Property Document

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property:** two acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 <u>18 236100 4079335</u>	3 _____
2 _____	4 _____

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title: **Bryan Clark Green, Architectural Historian**

organization: **Virginia Department of Historic Resources** date: **15 September 2003**

street & number: **2801 Kensington Avenue** telephone: **(804) 367-2323 x117**

city or town: **Richmond** state: **VA** zip code: **23221**

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs:** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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## Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: **Ms. Ella Avery-Smothers**

street & number: **4130 Mount Vernon Drive**

telephone: **(310) 677-3318 / (323) 864-7760**

city or town: **Los Angeles** state: **CA** zip code: **90008**

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia

Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 7 Page 1

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**7. Summary Description:**

St. Paul's School stands in a grove of pine trees in the northwest corner of the intersection of State Route 644 and Interstate highway 85 in rural Brunswick County, Virginia. Completed in 1920, the one-room, weather boarded school was funded by a combination of private funds, public support, and all-important funding from the Rosenwald Fund. One of the early Rosenwald-supported schools, the St. Paul's school was built while the Rosenwald Fund was still in its early, formative years, while still based at Tuskegee Institute. In later years, the Rosenwald Fund would move to Nashville, TN, and adopted a more formalized program, particularly standardized architectural plans. St. Paul's School stands as an important surviving example of the work of the early years of the Rosenwald Fund to provide educational facilities for African-Americans in the rural South.

**Detailed Description**

St. Paul's School is a one-room, one-teacher school, set in a two-acre site nestled into a grove of pine trees in the northwest corner of the intersection of Interstate 85 and Virginia State Route 644 in Brunswick County, Virginia. The school – measuring approximately 20 by 40 feet -- is of wood-frame construction, sheathed in un-beaded weatherboards, and covered by a standing seam metal roof, all of which rests on a rubble-stone foundation. The only decorative feature on the building is a lunette louvered vent in each of the gable ends. The primary interior space is a single 715-square-foot classroom. Lit by six, nine-over-nine, 91-inch tall, south-facing windows, the space was originally not electrified, and the generous windows provided all of the light for the classroom.

The school is entered through a small covered side porch on the west side of the school. From that porch, there are two entries into the school itself. The first is through a pair of five-panel pine doors that open directly into the single classroom itself, a room that housed all grades. The second entrance, a single five-panel pine door, gives entrance to a small, 60 square foot cloakroom. From that cloakroom, entrance is gained either into the classroom itself, or into a small, 87 square foot teachers' combination workroom, storage room, and – in later usage – kitchenette. Another single, five-panel, pine door allows direct access from this workroom to the exterior area (once probably part of a recreational area) on the north side of the school.

All interior walls (which remain in their original positions) are covered with horizontal, pine beaded board. All ceilings are covered with the same pine, beaded boards. All floors are of pine, tongue-and-groove boards. The interior was heated by a single stove (the original is no longer extant), which was ventilated through a single brick chimney. The only other loss to the interior is the removal of the original chalkboards, which once stretched along the east and west walls. The only modern intrusion to the interior is the addition of electricity.

There was no electricity, running water or sanitary facilities in the building. To the north of the school, two wood-framed privies were built – one for girls and one for boys. They have since been demolished. Also, to the north of the school stood a wood frame shed; that also has been demolished.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 8 Page 2

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## 8. Statement of Significance:

### Applicable Criteria

The St. Paul's School meets Criteria A and is significant in the areas black ethnic heritage and education for its close association with the history of Brunswick County and its African American community. St. Paul's School also meets Criteria C as a significant example of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia.

### Introduction

The concept of universal public education took root in Virginia with the new Virginia constitution of 1869 that provided for a universal, but segregated system of public education. Prior to this, schools were either private institutions or sponsored by religious organizations and were not available to most children in Virginia, especially African-American children. The provisions, however, were far from adequate.<sup>1</sup> During Reconstruction, former slaves actively pursued universal education, establishing hundreds of schools throughout the South. They viewed literacy and formal education as a path to liberation and freedom. The Julius Rosenwald Fund sought to use private money to leverage available public funds in order to improve the education and lives of African-Americans in the South.

### Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Fund

Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932) was the president of Sears, Roebuck and Company and a benefactor of African American causes. In 1917, he established the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the chief purpose of which was to improve the education for African Americans. Augmented by local taxes and private gifts, the fund paid for the construction of more than 5,000 schools in 15 southern states.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund traces its origins to May 1911, when Rosenwald first met Booker T. Washington. Rosenwald, aware of Washington's work, hosted a luncheon in Chicago for him, with the aim of raising funds for Tuskegee. During that meeting, the two men found they shared many beliefs. The two men shared the belief that individuals were better off starting life without too many advantages. Both men wanted to enable institutions to help people raise themselves from poverty, so long as that assistance could be administered without destroying a person's self-reliance. Both understood and had lived with the effects of racial and ethnic prejudice.<sup>2</sup>

After Washington met Rosenwald, he was able to convince him to pick up where Standard Oil left off. In 1912, Rosenwald funded six rural Alabama schools, and donated an additional \$25,000 to mark his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. The additional donation was to be distributed as matching building grants for other African-American schools.<sup>3</sup> This system of matching grants was to become a cornerstone of the Rosenwald Fund. The Alabama school-building program became

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 8 Page 3

the responsibility of Clinton Calloway in the Extension Department of Tuskegee Institute, under the close supervision of Booker T. Washington.

After several years of ill health, Washington died in 1915. The collaboration between Washington, Tuskegee, and Rosenwald had created 300 rural African-American schools in Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia, in addition to the original six, direct-funded schools. After Washington's death, Rosenwald endowed a memorial fund in Washington's name to pay the Institute's debts and add to its endowment.

The work begun by Washington and Rosenwald continued after Washington's death, and was soon undertaken on a much larger scale than either man had initially envisioned. Together Rosenwald, the General Education Board, the Slater and Jeanes Funds, and the new head of Tuskegee, Mrs. Booker T. Washington, sought to develop a systematic plan for rural African-American schools in the South. Rosenwald's new plan included provisions for the housing and training of teachers. To this end, Rosenwald agreed to pay one-third of the cost of building schools where strong financial and social commitment existed for the education in the local African American community. Each community seeking a school had to provide enough land for playgrounds and agricultural production; two acres was the minimum. Labor, land, and materials furnished locally counted as a cash contribution at current market value. Each community had to guarantee to equip, furnish, and maintain schools after they were built.

The project soon became too great for Tuskegee to manage alone. On October 30, 1917, Rosenwald incorporated the Julius Rosenwald Fund in Chicago as a non-profit corporation having as its purpose the promotion of "the well-being of mankind."<sup>4</sup> During the first phase of the Fund's operation (1917-1928), Rosenwald himself maintained control of the Fund. By 1920, administration of the building project was transferred from Tuskegee to Nashville. Also, for the first time, construction put under the management of a white man, Samuel L. Smith, who was named director of the Rosenwald Fund Southern Office. (Previously, Smith had been State Agent for Negro Schools at the Tennessee Board of Education from 1914-1920.) Smith's responsibilities included cooperating with the departments of public instruction in 14 southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia), and later West Virginia. Under Rosenwald's plan, Smith would see that African-American State Building Agents were hired, with half of their salaries paid by the Fund and half by the states desiring new schools. These state agents would inspect and supervise the construction of schools and teachers' homes in their respective states.

Rosenwald's advancing age and failing health led to a major reorganization of the Fund on January 1, 1928. After that reorganization, the Fund embraced new mandates, transitioning from private to corporate giving. Edwin Rodgers Embree replaced Rosenwald as president of the Fund. Embree employed a full-time Chicago headquarters staff that answered to a newly created board of trustees. Programs of the fund, which had originally focused on building rural African-American schools, expanded to include aid to colleges for teacher training, black leadership development, fellowships for promising black and white students, research on African-American

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 8 Page 4

health and medical services, subsidies for county and school libraries, appropriations for specific social studies, and contributions to agencies and individuals working in the field of race relations.

Julius Rosenwald believed that the generation that contributed to the making of wealth should be the one to witness the fruits of it. Accordingly, he stipulated that the Fund expend its interest and principle within 25 years of his death. (Rosenwald died in 1932.) Accordingly, Embree discontinued the Rosenwald school building program in 1937 and closed the Fund completely in 1948. Until the past decade, the Rosenwald Fund was the largest philanthropic fund in the United States designed to fully expend itself in the name of the services it was established to provide.

By the end of the Rosenwald Fund's school-building program in 1932, the Fund had aided in the construction of 5,357 new schools in 883 counties across 15 southern states. The Fund also occasionally supported construction of workshops and teachers homes. The largest numbers of Rosenwald schools were built in North Carolina – 813. In addition, Mississippi had 637, Texas 527, South Carolina 500, Louisiana 435, Alabama 407, Arkansas 389, Virginia 381, Tennessee 373, Georgia 261, Oklahoma 198, Kentucky 158, Maryland 153, Florida 125, and Missouri 4. The total cost of the entire project was \$28,408,520. This includes \$4,364,869 (15.36% in Rosenwald funds), \$18,105,805 (63.73%) in public funds, \$4,725,891 (16.64%) from African Americans, and \$1,211,975 (4.27%) from the white community.<sup>5</sup>

Rosenwald schools were built in 79 of Virginia's 95 counties – fully 83% of all counties in Virginia had at least one Rosenwald school. Since the overwhelming majority of Rosenwald schools were built in rural areas, when one discounts the more urbanized parts of Virginia, it is fair to say that virtually every rural county in Virginia had at least one Rosenwald school. Most Rosenwald schools in Virginia built in Virginia were of the smaller designs, specifically the one- or two-teacher types. Twenty-per-cent of Rosenwald schools in Virginia (73) were designed for one teacher, while some 50% (184) were designed for two teachers. Of the larger designs, only the three-teacher designs were built with any frequency (45 schools, or 12%). Very few larger schools were built in Virginia. The only larger schools built in any numbers were the six-teacher types, of which only 15 (4%) were built. Only 3 five-teacher schools, 4 seven-teacher, and 5 eight-teacher schools were built in Virginia. Of the very largest types, there were no nine-teacher schools, and only one each of the ten- and eleven-teacher schools.

The temporal distribution of Rosenwald school construction in Virginia was fairly evenly distributed. On average, 24 Rosenwald schools were built each year, beginning in 1917, and ending in the budget year 1931-32. (Construction figures for the years 1917-20 are combined, as the Tuskegee records did not record school construction by year. After the program was transferred to Nashville, the figures were kept by budget year.) The most active construction spanned the budget years 1922-23 to 1926-27. Construction ranged from a low of 7 schools constructed in the final budget year of the program (1931-32), to a high of 45 during 1923-24. The next most productive single budget years were 1926-27 (38 schools) 1922-23 and 1924-25 (35 schools each), and 1925-26 (32 schools). During the Tuskegee years from 1917-21, school



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia

Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 8 Page 5

construction averaged just over 15 schools per year.

### The Architecture of Rosenwald Schools

The schools varied in size from small one-teacher schools up to seven-teacher facilities that offered instruction from first-grade through high school. In the Fund's early years, wood-frame, two- and three-teacher schools were the most common. In later years, larger schools constructed of brick were built with greater frequency. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Rosenwald Fund was the mandatory standards that had to be met in order to receive funding. These standards dictated that the proposed lot for school construction must consist of at least two acres. In addition, the architecture of the school was required to follow one of the designs outlined in guidance.

The Fund first published architectural plans produced by a pair of African-American architecture professors at Tuskegee, Robert R. Taylor and W.A. Hazel, in a 1915 pamphlet titled "The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community." Taylor and Hazel created plans for a one-teacher school, two variations on a five-teacher school, and included plans for an industrial building, a privy, and two homes for teachers.

In 1920, control of the school-building program shifted to the new Rosenwald Fund office in Nashville. There, director Samuel L. Smith created new designs. The Fund soon built on those foundations with the publication of *Community School Plans*. The Rosenwald Fund reprinted *Community School Plans* twice, once in 1929 in *For Better Schoolhouses*, and again in *Community Units* in 1941. Smith produced plans for schools that ranged in size from one to seven teachers, with separate designs for buildings that faced east-west and buildings that faced north-south. Smith also produced plans for privies, industrial buildings, and residences for teachers. The plans were eventually distributed by the Interstate School Building Service, and reached an audience far beyond the South.<sup>6</sup>

The most recognizable architecture features of Rosenwald schools were large banks of windows, an important feature in an era where rural schools seldom had the benefit of electricity. Samuel Smith's plans specified room size and height, blackboard and desk placement, paint colors, window shades, all in order to make the most of available light. Smith insisted that windows be placed so that light came only from the students' left, and included alternative plans depending upon the orientation of the school.

### St. Paul's School

The only one-room school of the 13 constructed in Brunswick County with Rosenwald Fund support, (of the remainder, 11 had two teachers, and one had three teachers) St. Paul's School was built with a total of \$1,500 from the Rosenwald Fund. Of that total, the African-American contribution was \$450, the public contribution \$750, and the Rosenwald Fund contribution \$300. St. Paul's School was one of the early undertakings of the Rosenwald Fund, still in its formative years. In the period in which St. Paul's School was constructed, the Rosenwald Fund was still

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia**

**Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document**

**Section 8 Page 6**

administered from Tuskegee Institute under Robert Russa Moton. Likely one of the results of its construction in the early years of the Fund, before procedures were fully established and tested, the St. Paul's School appears to have been constructed on private – not public – land, as was later required. This would impact the school in its later years.

On October 7, 1941, a local African-American sharecropper named Stewart Avery purchased the 123-acre farm of Delia Baily; included within the land was the two-acre parcel on which was located the St. Paul's School. The purchase proved contentious in the local community, as Avery claimed ownership of the school. The dispute was resolved with the appointment of a Special Commissioner, J.C. Hutchinson, who decided that the school and the two-acre site belonged to the Brunswick County School Board. The deed was not granted to Brunswick County until May 1951, and until his death in July 1968, Avery maintained the school belonged to him. Meanwhile, the school closed in June 1960 and remained vacant and disused for over 40 years. The school was then purchased by Ella Avery Smothers, a daughter of Stewart Avery, who is restoring the school and intends to use it as a museum and cultural center.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 9 Page 8

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 9 Page 9

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia

Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 9 Page 10

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia

Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section 10 Page 10

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Boundaries for St. Paul's School are the entire two-acre lot as shown on the Brunswick County, Virginia tax map, parcel.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries include the entire two-acre parcel that was purchased by the county for a school and historically has been associated with St. Paul's School.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section      Page 11

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**Photographic Information:**

All photographs are of:  
St. Paul's School  
Brunswick Co., Virginia  
VDHR File Number: 012-5010  
VDHR Negative Numbes: 21009 and 21010  
Bryan Clark Green, photographer

All negatives are stored with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources:

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: General view  
NEG. NO.: 21010 – Frame 20  
PHOTO: 1 of 9

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: General View  
NEG. NO.: 21020 -- Frame 7  
PHOTO: 2 of 9

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: Entry Porch  
NEG. NO.: 21010 – Frame 5  
PHOTO: 3 of 9

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: Classroom  
NEG. NO.: 21009 – Frame 6  
PHOTO: 4 of 9

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: Classroom  
NEG. NO.: 21009 – Frame 6  
PHOTO: 5 of 9

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: Classroom  
NEG. NO.: 21009 – Frame 11  
PHOTO: 6 of 9

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: Cloakroom.  
NEG. NO.: 21009 – Frame 18  
PHOTO: 7 of 9

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia**

**Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document**

**Section      Page 12**

---

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: Workroom.  
NEG. NO.: 21009 – Frame 21  
PHOTO: 8 of 9

DATE: September 2003  
VIEW OF: St. Paul's School  
View: Workroom.  
NEG. NO.: 21009 – Frame 20  
PHOTO: 9 of 9



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

St. Paul's School  
Brunswick County, Virginia  
Part of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia Multiple Property Document

Section      Page 13

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Endnotes:

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<sup>1</sup> Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal, Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Alicestyne Thurley-Adams, *Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky, 1917-1932*. (Frankfort: The Kentucky Heritage Council and the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission, 1997), 8, and M. R. Werner, Julius Rosenwald: The Life of a Practical Humanitarian (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), 114.

<sup>3</sup> Mary S. Hoffschwelle, Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools and Homes in Tennessee, 1900-1930. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Fisk University Special Collections, Rosenwald Fund Archives, Box 331:f4.

<sup>5</sup> Thurley-Adams, 21-22.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald School Conference: Resource Guide* (Murfreesboro, Tennessee: Middle Tennessee State University, 1995), 3-6.